



## Letter of Solidarity Regarding the 2024-2025 Winter Holiday

October 24, 2024

Rhonda Lenton  
President and Vice-Chancellor  
York University

Dear Rhonda,

We the undersigned student, academic, and non-academic employee representatives of the university write to call for a revised 2024 winter holiday schedule.

Comparator universities in our city, Toronto Metropolitan University and the University of Toronto, are offering their staff a significantly longer paid break than is being offered by York.

In the case of TMU, staff are being given two full weeks for the winter holidays (for a total of sixteen consecutive days without work). The University of Toronto is offering one day less than TMU. In contrast, York University is offering staff a winter holiday of only nine consecutive days.

The university's suggestion that staff deplete their banked vacation in order to obtain the same amount of time off as our colleagues at other universities is indicative of York University's insufficient respect for the workers who make the university function. It also suggests an unfortunate miserliness not in keeping with the spirit of the holiday season. Practically, the suggestion that staff deplete their holidays is not in fact an option given that many are restricted from taking vacation at the beginning of the semester as a condition of their employment.

This year, many among York University staff face unprecedented stressors, due to workload issues arising in part from a prolonged period of reduced hiring and unfilled vacancies, the anticipated effects of short staffing due to the Voluntary Exit Program, and various restructuring initiatives that deepen insecurity about potential future cuts. More than ever, staff need a respite over the winter break to spend time with their families, to rest, recuperate, and recharge so they can begin the winter semester afresh and contribute to making the best campus possible for our students and community members.

We call upon you to reconsider this decision and, as you have done in the past, we urge you to align York's winter break schedule with that of the other Toronto universities.

Aïssata Hann – President, York Federation of Students  
Ellie Perkins – President, York University Faculty Association  
Angus Van Harten – Executive Member, Osgoode Hall Faculty Association  
Zoë Newman – Chairperson, CUPE 3903  
Frank D'Agostino – President, CUPE 1356  
Sonny Day – President, York University Staff Association